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Service Innovation as Consumer Experienced Phenomenon: A Service Experience Investigation of Smartphone Apps

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Innovations have been regarded by researchers and practitioners to be the drivers of global competitiveness and organizational growth. Historically, innovations have been studied in the context of innovations in manufacturing firms, with extensive focus on product innovations. Since the last two decades, however, an emerging literature in innovation research has exclusively focussed on service innovations. Service innovation studies, till date, have focused extensively on management techniques of innovation within firms, drivers of innovation, roles of organisational leaders and employees, impacts of innovation, and adoption and diffusion of innovations among customers. All these themes of service innovation research, however, exclusively focus on the firms' perspective and scarcely shed light on the consumers' perspective of understanding service innovations. This study attempts to address this research gap by investigating service innovations as a consumer experienced phenomenon. The empirical research data is based on a phenomenological study conducted in August 2012 using BBC news app for a week long exercise where the participants of the study were requested to record their usage experiences in an 'app diary'. The participant narratives, as self-recorded in app diaries, form the empirical base for this paper. The findings indicate that consumer experiences of service innovations are not restricted to the benefits or outcomes ('What') of innovations but also include the process ('How'), temporal ('When') and spatial ('Where') aspects of app experience. Also, the findings revealed several unintended consequences (unintended from the firms' perspective) of BBC app usage in

consumers' lifeworld. Characterizing smartphone apps as service innovation, this is one of the few studies which investigate consumer perspective on service innovation, going beyond studying innovation 'for' consumers, to investigating innovation 'as' consumers' experienced phenomenon. Also, the study contributes to the synthesis approach of researching service innovation by examining it as a consumer experienced phenomenon, independent of the product versus service innovation dichotomy.